

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR APPROPRIATION BILL.

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MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN REGARD TO

*Certain portions of the bill (H. R. 1594) making appropriations for the diplomatic and consular service.*

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AUGUST 15, 1876.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

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*To the House of Representatives :*

In announcing, as I do, that I have attached my signature of official approval to the "Act making appropriations for the consular and diplomatic service of the Government for the year ending June 30, 1877, and for other purposes," it is my duty to call attention to a provision in the act directing that notice be sent to certain of the diplomatic and consular officers of the Government "to close their offices."

In the literal sense of this direction, it would be an invasion of the constitutional prerogative and duty of the Executive.

By the Constitution the President "shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present consent, and he shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate shall appoint, ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls," &c.

It is within the power of Congress to grant or withhold appropriation of money for the payment of salaries and expenses of the foreign representatives of the Government.

In the early days of the Government a sum in gross was appropriated, leaving it to the Executive to determine the grade of the officers and the countries to which they should be sent.

Latterly, for very many years, specific sums have been appropriated for designated missions or employments, and, as a rule, the omission by Congress to make an appropriation for any specific post has heretofore been accepted as an indication of a wish on the part of Congress, which the executive branch of the Government respected and complied with.

In calling attention to the passage which I have indicated, I assume that the intention of the provision is only to exercise the constitutional

prerogatives of Congress over the expenditures of the Government, and to fix a time at which the compensation of certain diplomatic and consular officers shall cease, and not to invade the constitutional rights of the Executive, which I should be compelled to resist; and my present object is not to discuss or dispute the wisdom of failing to appropriate for several offices, but to guard against the construction that might possibly be placed on the language used as implying a right in the legislative branch to direct the closing or discontinuing of any of the diplomatic or consular offices of the Government.

U. S. GRANT.

WASHINGTON, *August 14, 1876.*